

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The abstract and the specification of the disclosure have been carefully reviewed and revised to make grammatical and idiomatic improvements in order to aid the Examiner in further consideration of the application. No new matter has been added. Also attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the abstract and the specification by the current amendment. The attachment is captioned “**Version with Markings to Show Changes Made.**”

In item 1 of the Office Action of May 28, 2008, drawing Figures 20-22 are objected to for not being designated as prior art. Replacement drawing sheets are submitted herewith, designating drawing Figures 20-22 as prior art; thus, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

In item 2 of the Office Action, claims 26, 28, 36, and 38 are objected to due to informalities. The claims have been carefully reviewed and revised to address the Examiner’s objection. This objection is no longer applicable to the amended claims 26, 28, 36, and 38, and its withdrawal is respectfully requested.

In items 3 and 4 of the Office Action, claims 19-23, 30-34, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bauer et al. (WO 2003/081773). In item 5 of the Office Action, claims 25 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bauer et al. in view of Inoue et al. (US 2003/0117240). In item 6 of the Office Action, claims 19-23 and 26-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Plesski et al. (US 5,682,126) in view of Bauer et al. In item 7 of the Office Action, claims 31 and 36-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Plesski et al. in view of Bauer et al. (US6,420,946). These rejections are in applicable to the amended claims for the reasons below, and their withdrawal is respectfully requested.

In item 8 of the Office Action, claim 24 is indicated as directed to allowable subject matter. The Applicants thank the Examiner for this indication.

Independent claims 19 and 31 have been amended to include all the limitations of

claim 24, as well as intermediate claims 22 and 23. Thus, it is submitted that claims 19 and 31, as well as claims 20, 21, 25-30, and 32-40 depending therefrom, are now clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels that there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Kazunori NISHIMURA et al.

/Aldo A. D'Ottavio/

By **2008.08.22 11:04:00 -04'00'**

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